

ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

**THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT  
OUR ALLY**

IN ADVANCING  
COMPREHENSIVE  
SEXUALITY EDUCATION

**YOUACT** EUROPEAN YOUTH NETWORK ON  
SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

SUPPORTED BY  **GENERATION NOW**  
OUR HEALTH OUR RIGHTS



## **An Advocacy Toolkit Developed by and for Young People**

### **The European Parliament - Our Ally in Advancing Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

#### Acknowledgements

YouAct is run largely by volunteers, most of whom dedicate their professional, academic and personal lives – to sexual health and rights. We come from different European backgrounds; And yet we share many dreams, principles and a commitment to give sexuality the place it deserves in our lives and communities.

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For more information, please visit our website [www.youact.org](http://www.youact.org)

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDS = Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome  
CSE = Comprehensive Sexuality Education  
EP = European Parliament  
EU = European Union  
HIV = Human Immunodeficiency Virus  
ICPD = International Conference on Population and Development  
MEP = Member of the European Parliament  
NGO = Non-governmental Organisation  
ODA = Official Development Assistance  
SDGs = Sustainable Development Goals  
SRHR = Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights  
STIs = Sexually Transmitted Infections  
UN = United Nations  
WHO = World Health Organisation

# INTRODUCTION

## YouAct

YouAct is an entirely youth-led network. Its members are young people from across the Council of Europe Member States, active in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Since its launch in Lisbon in 2004, YouAct has grown into an increasingly effective youth-led organisation, undertaking key advocacy, training and awareness raising activities. We work at European and international levels.

YouAct works to empower young people so that they take an active role in their communities and organisations, and advocate for sexual and reproductive rights as human rights. YouAct believes that decisions affecting young people should be planned and formed with the meaningful participation of young people themselves.

YouAct envisions a world where sexuality is recognized as a positive aspect of life, and where young people have access to information and services so that they can make informed decisions, about all aspects of their sexuality and reproductive lives, free from coercion and discrimination.

## Aim & objectives of the toolkit

This toolkit is developed by young people for all young people interested in how and why they can advocate for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). We are sharing our experience from successfully implemented advocacy projects and encourage you to replicate them because we believe the European institutions should be taking access to CSE forward.

## The EP, Our Ally project overview

This toolkit is developed as part of the “The European Parliament, Our Ally” project funded by [Generation Now: Our Health, Our Rights](#), a bold, new, first-of-its-kind partnership that came together in response to build momentum to integrate national and global efforts to end the HIV epidemic and to protect SRHR.

The project aims to facilitate discussions between youth advocates and decision-makers regarding the importance for young people to have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information, education and services, including CSE.

## Why the EP?

The European Parliament (EP) represents European citizens. As the only European institution that is directly elected, citizens of the European Union (EU) choose through elections who represent them, which takes place every five years. Elections are organized in each Member

State; each country has a number of members in the European Parliament based on the size of their population.

With the adoption of several treaties, the role of the European Parliament has grown to comprise<sup>1</sup>:

- Legislative responsibilities, which enable the European Parliament to create a supportive policy environment, and take decisions on proposed legislation and reports relating to key SRHR issues;
- Budgetary power, which enables MEPs, Committees and political parties to influence the allocation of funding for health services, including sexual and reproductive health, through their role in the budget procedure of the European Union;
- Monitoring of the democratic process, which enables the European Parliament and its members to ensure accountability, receive petitions from citizens and demonstrate political will in addressing issues of concern to European constituencies.

The EP has certain exclusive competencies, given by the Member States, but on some aspects, Member States decide alone (such as education and culture). However, these topics are often the subject of EU support measures, like the Erasmus+ programme, which provides young Europeans with opportunities to study, volunteer, participate in a traineeship or gain work experience abroad. You can find out more about the division of competencies between the EP and the Member States in [this document \(page 6\)](#).

The EP can, therefore, support the SRHR of young people and a number of MEPs openly do so. An interesting discussion took place at the beginning of January 2018 on the [Challenges to Sexual and Relationship Education in Europe](#) with MEPs representing four different political groups participating. Through such actions, the EP sets an example both internally among the European Union, but also externally, to its partners. Other actions, like the decision with a higher political influence to not endorse the progressive [Estrela report](#) (making the case for a broad spectrum of SRHR guaranteed to all individuals) are less supportive of CSE, which demonstrates a polarized EP. However, it is important to note that MEPs are making decisions which impact the lives of young people from and outside the European Union, especially from accession countries, since they must approve the integration of new Member States, as well as partner countries.

The EU is one of the largest contributors to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and is the main trading partner for most countries in the Global South. In 2016, funding for sexual and reproductive health and family planning was maintained or even increased in a large number of European donor countries, according to [Countdown 2030 Europe](#)<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (a thematic funding instrument for EU external action) the EU aims to support projects in the area of human rights, fundamental

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<sup>1</sup> European Youth Advocacy Handbook, YouAct, available here: <http://youact.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/European-Youth-Advocacy-Handbook-V2.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> European Donor Support to Sexual & Reproductive Health & Family Planning. Trends Analysis 2016-17, Countdown 2030 Europe, available here [http://www.countdown2030europe.org/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/Countdown2030Europe\\_EuropeanDonorTrackingSRHFPSupport%202016-2017.pdf](http://www.countdown2030europe.org/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/Countdown2030Europe_EuropeanDonorTrackingSRHFPSupport%202016-2017.pdf)

freedoms and democracy in non-EU countries. We can clearly see that the EU is a guardian of human rights both in Europe and beyond.

It is important to note that although there are clear reasons why young people should advocate for CSE at European level, every project has its own specificities. You should only target the European Parliament if the power analysis and all the other steps taken before the project starts to point to the EP as the most effective channel for your advocacy action.

## Why CSE?

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is a crucial factor in protecting the health and well-being of young people. It addresses the need to foster emotional-sexual intelligence and the capacity for healthy, intimate bonding and growth. CSE enables young people to know how to take care of their own health and relationships. It is clear that young people want to access information about sexuality and reproduction. They often find the school as the most appropriate environment for this. Moreover, it is only by ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, information and education that we will develop sustainably, according to the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015.

According to the latest [assessment](#)<sup>3</sup> of the current state of sexuality education in Europe and Central Asia, the state of implementation of sexuality education varies widely among countries and even within countries of the WHO European Region. However, in most countries, there is a legal basis for sexuality education, which is one of the prerequisites for ensuring sustainable implementation.

CSE includes scientifically accurate information about human development, anatomy, and reproductive health, as well as information about contraception, childbirth and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV ([source](#)). CSE encourages young people to reflect on their values and think critically about healthy relationships when it comes to consent, sexual orientations, gender identity, HIV status and many other elements. CSE aims to empower those marginalized, such as young people living with HIV to feel confident about their future. [Evidence](#) shows that CSE interventions have the following outcomes: HIV knowledge increase, increased knowledge and use of contraception, increased self-efficacy for HIV protection and improved attitudes related to HIV prevention (evidence from in-school interventions) and decrease of STI prevalence; decrease in physical violence or sexual assault perpetrated by men (evidence from out-of-school interventions).

In realizing access to CSE, States should take an integrated and intersectional approach. By integrated we mean that access to information and education is enabled together with access to youth-friendly, accessible and high-quality services and the relevant policies, like protection from gender-based violence and discrimination. An intersectional CSE approach recognizes that other concepts are related to sexuality and reproduction that highly influence the health

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<sup>3</sup> BZgA (Federal Centre for Health Education) and IPPF EN (International Planned Parenthood Federation - European Network) (2017). Sexuality Education in Europe and Central Asia: State of the Art and Recent Developments. An Overview of 25 Countries. Cologne: BZgA, available [here](#)



and well-being of young people. Other concepts include the perception of gender roles, race, the perception of violence, rates of violence and bullying, and gender inequality in digital spaces, among many others. In finding solutions, some of these issues can and should be tackled together.

## What to expect?

The impact of advocacy projects is generally difficult to capture since the political environment is constantly changing and interests are shaped by many factors. It is, therefore, crucial to be realistic in setting up goals.

For a project like this, which involves meetings with the Members of the European Parliament we can look at short and medium or long-term goals. In the first category, we aim for the MEPs to acknowledge the information “from the grassroots level” regarding the needs and challenges of young people, to get to know the youth organization presenting this information and its way of functioning, to exchange ideas on what both the MEPs and the advocates can to move forward. Regarding the longer term effects, we need to take into consideration previous or future projects as well, since a stand-alone intervention is not likely to produce any long term impact. In our case, we can aim to transform the interaction into a more substantial collaboration with the MEPs on getting their public support for the organization’s work or making a public (online) statement, supporting a specific call to action, committing to work on youth issues, etc.

A possible outcome from these meetings, for example, is an invitation to work jointly on a letter, a call to action or a joint statement to be shared with other MEPs. Resources are generally scarce and it is crucial to plan such interventions timely and also to consider the possibility of a follow-up. Given the financial instability and lack of funds, not all the suggestions from the MEPs can be acted upon and implemented, however, it is important to give it a thought from the beginning and to try to find ways to continue such work. Some ideas can be turned into new projects and be fundraised. Others might be lost, which still constitutes a valuable lesson learnt in strategic thinking and planning.

# PREPARING TO ENGAGE WITH THE MEPS

## Analysing the project and advocacy message for CSE and HIV

### So what are advocacy messages?

It is important to remember that political advocacy is not a one-time event, but rather a process. It is not only about raising awareness, but also about achieving specific goals and developing strategies based on research and analysis. Lobbying and campaigning can be part of an advocacy strategy, but they are not synonyms with political advocacy either.<sup>4</sup>

For your communication to be effective, it is essential to be clear about the outcome of any message you are trying to convey. Therefore, formulating strong and clear advocacy messages will be one of the most crucial parts of the entire strategy; these will be the messages that you or your organisation will be taking forward in efforts to influence decision-makers to support your work or not. In order to be effective, you can ask yourself the following questions when engaging in advocacy:

- What do you want your audience to understand?
- What do you want them to remember?
- What do you want them to do?

An advocacy message can be any kind of evidence-based statement about the issue you are passionate about and the objective that you aim to achieve. Advocacy messages strengthen a cause, and if well communicated, will stick in people's heads for a long time.

To make your advocacy message more powerful you can use statistics and comparisons to support your main statement. Another method is to refer to comparative examples, anecdotal evidence or (personal) stories. The following [toolkit](#) has a format on page 20 on how to develop and bring across advocacy messages to different audiences. As from page 27 of the [Training Guide 'EU advocacy on Central America'](#), the phases and components of a political advocacy plan are explained.

Avoid using complicated, or long sentences. The message needs to be clear, short and should have a possible call to action in the end.

Advocacy messages are usually tailored to the target audience, in our case the MEPs, but despite that, do not assume that people know the usual jargon of the field. Try making it as clear and understandable for non-professionals in the field, as possible. Avoid using acronyms (or at least make sure that they are clearly explained first)!

You can use 'hooks' to draw the listener's attention, by linking the issue you want to discuss, to an issue that your listener cares about. For example, you could use the preoccupation for

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<sup>4</sup> [Training Guide: EU Advocacy on Central America](#) by ACT Alliance EU and Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico

young people's health and link it to HIV and CSE as a way to prevent HIV transmission and increase CSE in schools.

Also, try to narrow your messages down, and try to stay focused on an issue so it does not get overwhelming.

Example: "Access to information is a young person's right. And it is the duty of governments, and relevant institutions to provide accurate, scientifically correct and youth-friendly information to us." The message is loud and clear, but it forces out a question - what can I do? So it needs to be followed up with an action point: "We ask governments to engage more young people in the curriculum creation process", or "We call the ministry of education to conduct consultations with young people, in order to learn what changes can be done in the existing curriculums".

And it goes without saying, that your project objective and your advocacy messages should be interconnected. Try answering these questions before drafting your messages:

- What is the issue I am tackling?
- Why is this issue important to me?
- Who can I ask for support? Who can best help me?
- What needs to be done to tackle the issue? Can I think of specific action points?
- Do I have the evidence to support my action points, or do I need to do some research?
- When, and how am I going to take action?
- How would I know if I have been successful?

Remember, if your answers to these questions are SMART (**s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic and **t**ime-bound), the success indicators will follow naturally. And last, but certainly not least, do your research.

## Developing an action plan

Now that you have your advocacy messages identified, it is time to develop an action plan.

**Step 1:** do a SWOT analysis. Identify the possible strengths and weaknesses of your project, as well as think of the possible opportunities, and threats.

**Step 2:** Use an Excel sheet to develop an action timeline. If you are using several worksheets for several actions, label them according to action and date, and put them in the project folder. The activity sheet needs to have the name of the activity, start date, end date, responsible person/people, costs, and any additional comments clearly highlighted in them.

**Step 3:** Put the activities in a cohesive timeframe. Make sure that there is a logical flow between them. Make sure to leave some space (usually a week) in case of emergencies between actions. Also, leave a bit of space in the end for drafting the final report.

## The importance of personal goals, and aims.

It is always important to meet the MEPs with a specific goal in mind. This could be connected to the overall project objective, or can be a personal milestone, like “be more confident in delivering my advocacy messages”.

We have drafted a special questionnaire for this, that you can fill in for personal accountability, measurement, and expectations. We call it an Action Plan ([Annex 1](#)) and you should fill it in before, and after the meetings with the MEPs.

## Support mechanisms.

Your team is your main support mechanism. Make sure to follow up with your tasks, and let them know if you cannot finish your task in time, or if anything is unclear.

Always plan ahead for informal skype meetings, after each task is finalized to make sure that everyone is on the same page, or to simply check in. Make sure to be realistic in what you can and cannot accomplish, do not be afraid to ask for support, and be transparent in your communication with your team.

Remember, self-care, and co-worker welfare is a must, especially in the human rights defenders field, to avoid burnout.

# MEETING WITH THE MEPS

## Planning for Brussels: DOs and DON'Ts

### DOs:

- Prepare small desk research for each of the MEPs you will meet in Brussels by developing 'MEP profiles' (see a template in [Annex 2](#)). Find out all relevant information, like what they studied, their political career, what their role is in the parliament, and which commissions and delegations they are a part of. The next step is to see what commissions and delegations link up to CSE/SRHR/youth issues, what activities they undertook or votes they cast related to the topic in question so that you have some entry points and questions for your conversation. Additionally, this can also guide you on which subjects to avoid during your meetings.
- Prepare a one-pager with information that can be given to the MEP during the meetings (example in [Annex 3](#)), business cards with official contact information come in handy as well. By preparing a one-pager with accurate information, you will build trust, and also have something tangible that you would leave after the meeting is over, which can be an effective channel for further engagement. Make sure to have multiple printed copies of the one-pager, and give them to the MEPs as well as their team members attending the meeting. For example, we left them [these](#) infographics summarizing the discussions on CSE with young people from several countries in Europe.
- Have a back-up team member in Brussels, who has an EU phone connection or telephone plan. This might be crucial in emergency re-scheduling situations.
- Prepare a schedule with the name of the MEP, name of their assistant, their contact details, and the meeting spot. You can do this online and bring a printed version, or make the online schedule available offline on your phone. That way, you always know whom to reach on what number or e-mail address, as well as to double check the location for your appointment.
- Reflect - either by yourself or in your small group - at the end of each day (or if there is time, after each meeting) to see what went well and what did not go as anticipated. That way your strategy or messages can be adjusted and you will be better prepared for the next day, or meeting.
- Set clear goals: what do you want to achieve? To get this clear for yourself, you can use the action plan template outlined in the last chapter ([Annex 1](#)).
- If you encounter an MEP with an opposing stance from yours, do not argue with them. Provide solutions and change the subject to the one you both agree on.
- Be sensitive to cultural norms. Lobbying is done differently in different countries, so are the opinions on messages you want to bring across - especially when talking about CSE.
- Show the audience that you understand the diversity of opinions when it comes to CSE, but know your facts, evidence and science, and make strong arguments. Alternatively, do not lie, or provide information that you are not 100% certain. Lobbying and advocacy are built on trust, admitting that you do not know something is the most honest thing to do. Offer to check the fact, and follow up after the meeting with an e-mail.

**DON'Ts:**

- Plan back to back meetings. When your schedule is too tight and you have the meetings back to back, there is a higher risk, you will face logistical challenges. Make sure you have at least half an hour, but preferably an hour, in between your meetings. The building is immense and MEPs sometimes have other appointments which means that you may start later than anticipated.
- Just defend your side of the story and/or force your message upon an MEP that has a different opinion in regards to CSE as you have. Always try to find common ground and understanding, and have a dialogue instead of offending people with different beliefs and understandings if it comes to, for example, abortion or comprehensive sexuality education. Additionally, do not be verbally aggressive. This will always backfire.
- Schedule a meeting with an MEP whose views are drastically different than yours, or your team's if this is your first advocacy experience. Advocacy in the EP can often be stressful for different reasons, so if this is your first time, meet the MEPs who you know are on the same side and think together how you can collaborate, or raise awareness.

## Making the most of a meeting

In order to gain maximum support for your project as a result of your meeting, it is important to take some steps into consideration before, during and after the meeting with the MEPs.

**Before:**

- Collect as much background information as you can by answering the following questions: Who took the initiative to held the meeting? Was there any previous contact? What are the interests, roles, background and views of the MEPs? How do you think the MEPs see you, why did they agree to meet you and what power or influence do they think you have?
- Decide what you wish and hope to achieve from this meeting, but also consider how you can appeal to the MEPs interests.
- Prepare well, either by yourself or with your group. Decide who will start, who will take notes, and plan responses to possible questions.

**During:**

- Introduce everyone in the room, and give a brief background to your organisation if it is the first meeting. Additionally, clarify the purpose of the meeting.
- Relax, be polite and friendly, and listen actively.
- Do not forget to take a picture and ask everyone permission and consent to use it on your communication channels. The content is good for communication, but also for documentation and reporting.
- Do not forget to note down the suggestions, and points provided by MEPs and ask if they and their team would agree to be contacted later, to actualize these suggestions.

**After:**

- Do not forget to follow up. Thank the MEPs for their input, their time and send them all the necessary information that you might have promised, as well as a brief of what the meeting was about.

# FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING

## What are the next steps

Good planning always includes concrete follow-up steps in the entire advocacy campaign and even though follow-up is one of the latest phases in the process, it plays a crucial role in achieving the initial goals.

After meeting with the MEPs, an internal evaluation is needed. The advocacy team discusses successes and challenges, as well as lessons learned to improve actions in the future. Ideally, the advocacy project should include a PMEL (Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) framework with concrete figures such as indicators to ensure good quality analysis. The PMEL framework presents a broad picture of the process and provides links between different phases of the actions. The internal evaluation will answer questions whether the advocacy action was achieved, and if not, what were the reasons and how it can be improved in the future.

The concrete follow-up steps might include:

- Make sure to remain in contact with the MEPs; after the meeting, a follow-up mail should be sent in a timely manner. It should clearly state gratitude for the time and attention that were given by the MEPs and their teams for the meeting. The meeting should be clearly summarized and main suggestions should be prioritized and listed in a concrete and accurate manner.
- According to the priorities of the organization, further support of MEPs and their teams should be asked only for a limited number of suggestions; all the information mentioned during the meeting should be included in this email as well, together with detailed contact information on who is the contact person for this particular initiative;
- Organize a follow-up social media campaign which will give more visibility to the successes - share and post key messages. Some of the MEPs actively use social media channels, thus you can engage them in online media activities. The one-pager social media package including key messages and hashtags can be shared with them in advance or after the meetings. Do not forget to re-share and repost their tweets as well! You can also use screenshots of their posts and all social media activities for reporting (especially if the advocacy actions are coming from a funded project).
- Share all the relevant materials with the MEPs: research, fact-sheets, calls, reports etc.
- In a long-term perspective, keep monitoring their votes and analyze if there is a change in their positions, this will provide concrete examples of the impact of the advocacy activity.
- Offer support to help them out with advice, data collection or other tasks and be ready to answer their requests; try to build a long-term relationship and position yourself as a specialist.

## Engaging further with the EP

There are various ways and methods to stay engaged with the EP, those actions can be part of the follow-up processes in the advocacy campaigns or separate one-time activities.

- Make an **election pledge**. This is something that encourages future MEPs to stay accountable to their voters. A pledge is practically an election promise which can be structured in various ways. Ideally, a pledge should include the main messages used in your advocacy campaign. The candidates sign the public pledge and confirm their readiness to support the topics represented in it.
- Create a **petition**. Generally, petitions are defined as formal requests to authority, usually a governmental institution. In the EU context, the petition may present an individual request, a complaint or observation concerning the application of EU law or an appeal to the European Parliament to adopt a position on a specific matter. The right of petition is guaranteed under Article 227 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Learn more about petitions: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/petitions>

- Explore and learn more about other relevant tools to engage further. Some of them may sound ambitious for small-scale advocacy actions, however, do not be afraid to try them out. One the most engaging tools is known as the **European Citizens Initiative**, which was put in place by the Lisbon Treaty, the citizens' initiative allows 1 million citizens from at least a quarter of the EU Member States to ask the European Commission to propose legislation in areas that fall within its competence. Find out more: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/citizen-s-initiative>

## Dissemination

Creating a dissemination plan engages the effort of the organization to identify the best ways to share their knowledge and outcomes of the meetings with the MEPs for the project's particular purpose and target audience. In our case, it has been very helpful the fact that we already discussed the dissemination process before the meetings with the MEPs and also the case that specific members of the organisation were responsible for the actions that need to be taken to disseminate our work.

Dissemination took place even during the meetings as we shared photos of the young SRHR activists with the MEPs on our social media channels with different messages/statements. To be able to reach more audience and have a common dissemination policy we agreed with the MEPs to repost any of their messages as well.

Planning on how to disseminate the results of the project helped us to guide the process and kept us focused on the project's ultimate goal - the importance for young people to have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information, education and services, including CSE in building momentum to integrate national and global efforts to end the HIV epidemic and protect SRHR. Moreover, it enabled us to strengthen our dissemination policy and pushed us to ask ourselves "Who will benefit from the results"?



So we placed special emphasis on our audience and we focused on those people who were the main receivers of our messages. The goal of our dissemination was to make people aware that SRHR matters, to pass on the aim of the project and most importantly, to illustrate the significant role that organisations and young people play through advocacy and meetings with decision makers.

The key is to make the best use of all available resources and collaborate with other organizations where and when possible. That will allow access to a diversity of skills, networks, and knowledge.

A nonexhaustive list of dissemination strategies that organisations may consider can be the following:

- Press Releases;
- Research Report and Summary;
- Posters, Brochures, Newsletters;
- In-Person Dissemination;
- Online Distribution;
- Events;
- Traditional media outlets.

Undoubtedly while we were building our dissemination policy we took into account potential barriers. For example, this project was funded by a donor, thus, we needed to stick to a certain budget and all costs associated with the dissemination methods, as well as our activities were to be covered by the funds available. We also prepared the messages in accordance with our own resources and skills, did any designs by our own means, and disseminated the messages on social media accounts in accordance to a plan and with specific time constraints, thus avoiding hiring other people to carry out these tasks.

An example of one of our dissemination actions, published in a newsletter, can be found in the link below:

<http://youact.org/2019/03/04/at-the-table-with-members-of-the-european-parliament/>

# ANNEXES

## Annexe 1. Action Plan Template - Meetings with MEPs

Name:

Country:

Date:

<p><b>1. Before the meetings with the MEPs:</b> <i>(Add as many examples as you need)</i></p>
What is your aim?
What do you need to do in order to reach your aim?
On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being very far, and 10 being very close) how confident do you feel in reaching your aim?
What prior skills and knowledge do you possess that can help you in reaching your aim?
<p><b>2. During the meetings with the MEPs:</b> <i>(Add as many examples as you need)</i></p>
How can you ensure that your aim is heard and clearly understood during the meetings?
Which topics would you hope to be able to refer to?
What are some likely options that can happen during the meetings (please list at least two)?
How would you hope to deal with each option?
<p><b>3. After the meetings with the MEPs:</b> <i>(Add as many examples as you need)</i></p>
On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being very far, and 10 being very close) how close did you get to reaching your aim?
How would you evaluate your overall experience - success as well as difficulties?
What lesson do you wish to take with you after the meetings?
What is your long term goal? How do you plan to use the lessons learned from these meetings in a few months'/years' time?

## Annexe 2. MEPs Profiles Template

<i>(Insert picture here)</i>	Name of the MEP	Political Career
	The political group at the European level	- - - -
	Political party national level	
	Country	
	Member/substitute of commissions in the EP	SRHR Highlights, such as oral statements on relevant topics, contributions to plenary debates, speeches etc. - -

### Annexe 3. One-pager with Key Messages for the MEPs

## What do young people need in Europe?

*The following messages are based on the key findings of the previous projects implemented by YouAct and the partner organizations.*

There are more young people in the world than ever before, respectively in Europe as well, creating unprecedented potential for economic and social progress. With proper investment in their education and opening up opportunities, young people's ideas and innovations could transform the future.

Therefore, governments should recognize young people as one of the top priorities and respond to their needs, particularly, when it comes to **education, health, and well-being**. It is crucial to meaningfully engage young people in the decision-making processes in order to prioritize their needs.

In fact, young people are facing various challenges related to their health and well-being. Particularly, the Eastern European countries recently have encountered the rise of well-organized and funded opposition aiming to block access of all, particularly youth and women to basic reproductive and sexual health services and information. The region also struggles with a growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS. In addition, gender-based violence is widespread, homophobic and transphobic attitudes persist, and a significant part of Europe's youth population still does not have access to **Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)**. Moreover, in Western European countries such as the Netherlands, not all young people have access to proper Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

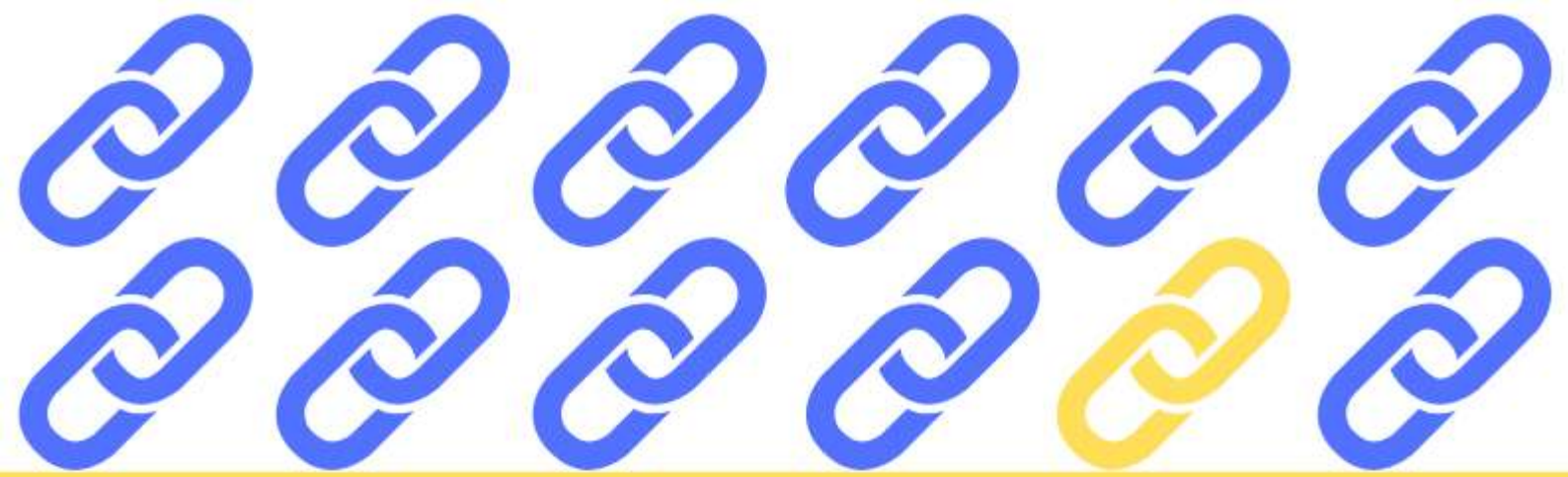
Access to CSE is a prerequisite to ensure that young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights are respected and fulfilled.

- CSE allows young people to know their bodies, the health care system within their community and their rights in accessing it. CSE enables young people to protect their health, well-being, and dignity;
- CSE includes scientifically accurate information about human development, anatomy, and reproductive health, as well as information about contraception, childbirth and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV;
- CSE encourages young people to reflect on their values and think critically about healthy relationships, in a community, in a country, when it comes to sexual orientations, gender identity, HIV status and many other. CSE aims to empower those living with HIV to speak up if they choose to and feel confident about their future.

All young people have the right to have a sexual and reproductive life, to enjoy it and to have the tools to stay healthy while doing so, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation and health conditions, including living with HIV. Access to CSE doesn't only impact individuals and their future, but also the future of communities and countries, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 4 and 5.

The outputs of the previous projects can be found on our website [www.youact.org](http://www.youact.org):

- *“Youth in Power” Youth SRHR Strategy;*
- *“The Current State of Sexuality Education in Cyprus, Georgia, Poland, Romania and the Netherlands Insights from a Youth Perspective”;*
- *“Evidence-based advocacy: Championing Sex-Ed in Europe”.*



**YOUACT** EUROPEAN YOUTH NETWORK ON  
SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

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